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Structure and Form: A Design Theory Manual

Michael Hann

EDITORIAL

1. Value of the work

- a) Research in this field is more generally focused on the science and mathematical perspective, to have access to a more creative approach will enhance the scope of research in this area, it adds value to the curriculum in the areas of multi discipline thinking, particularly bridging the gap between art and science (see the work of Ryan & Storey and the Free radical group as example.

<http://www.helenstoreyfoundation.org/news.htm>

<http://www.wearefreeradicals.co.uk/>.

- b) Student courses are constantly moving towards digital solutions, this book will encourage the student to think in a practical and inquisitive manner, being strongly image focused it will invite rather than intimidate.

2. Proposal manuscript

- a) The rationale is presented very clearly, and it is important that the point of the book not being a 'mathematics' journal is presented, this in fact could possibly be presented earlier in the statement, as student just assume the book is another geometric rule governing book. The rest of the rationale explains that this book is as related to the creative process as it is the principles of geometry.
- b) The content is extremely precise and allows the reader to be clearly informed of the content of each chapter, I have only read these introductions but the writing and clarity of thought makes the reader want to find out more. There is adequate explanation to allow the reader to know what the chapter is referring to. E.g. The explanation of Motifs as 'the building blocks of patterns', is informative, to the point and understandable, but needs to be drawn out (see comment below) If anything the length of 4. *Symmetry*: could be a bit shorter more in line with chapter 5.
- c) There is a lot of information in the Content section and some of the relevant points could have been highlighted and not embedded within the text. There are some important and relevant statements that get a bit lost in the text e.g. 4. Line 4 "Motifs are the building blocks of patterns" Is a good phrase that really illustrates the relevance of this subject as part of a design discipline.
- d) The writing style is very approachable and in a style comfortable for design students, who cannot always grasp a high academic style, which is often difficult to understand. My only comment is in places the style is slightly clumsy e.g. "Patterns, which are comprised of motifs which repeat on a regular basis across the plane,"

The writing style of Michael Hann is familiar to the design discipline, his knowledge and interest clearly understood.

- e) There is a lot of breadth of case material, some of which has already been covered in other journals. To reach the specifics of the rationale it would be beneficial to enlarge on the real design applications for some of the examples mentioned e.g. in chapter 5, even though there is limited support for detections in architectural contexts, animals, DNA, the solar system, music, dance, sculpture, from a design student perspective it would be of interest to relate some of the Fibonacci findings to such disciplines as music and dance. In general I think there is an enormous amount of case material presented, this is a large topic and to have summarised towards the design student provides another view point for a well covered topic.
- f) The references and sources relating to the topic from a design perspective are as concise as they can be within the field of application. My knowledge of references within a geometry discipline is not enough to comment on this aspect of referencing.
- g) The artwork references were difficult to judge, as they were in black and white and fairly small. It would be really good to see examples of some references in context e.g. The Alhambra Palaces, work of Le Corbusier, fractal examples: cauliflower and coastline examples. The details being analysed would have a greater context to the design and living world if the examples could be seen in the larger context.

3. Revision of the proposal.

In general I do not feel the proposal needs much revision, but perhaps the contents in each chapter could be laid out slightly more clearly and not have so much informative text embedded in the paragraphs. I think the proposal is well thought out at the stage it is at and am sure the points raised would be easier to rectify once engaged in the development of the full document.

4. Authors standing in the field.

Michael Hann not only holds the Chair of Design Theory at Leeds University, but he is also Director of ULITA. Having recently visited the ULITA and witnessed the achievement of the International textile archive, I can only propose that Michael Hann as an academic, author and academic entrepreneur is at the top of his field, both nationally and internationally. His enthusiasm in this specialist topic comes across and will be evident to students. Since 2003 Michael Hann has been prolific in his publications (9 books) Ranging from Pattern and Structure, Fashion Consumer in the global market place, Resist Dyeing and Patterning to A case study of Korean Man-made fibres, this demonstrating an exhaustive research and teaching interest, in his specialist field, however this

field opens to embrace other cultures. This broad approach with focus is one of the strengths of Michael Hann both as an academic and author.

5.
MARKET

Level / Year :
Undergrad year 2 +
Compulsory course
Essential reading
Library

6.
Competing titles:

This subject is fairly narrow and has been comprehensibly dealt with in the document, the comments in the document are correct. Research into other titles not mentioned in the document found two other titles linked by subject but very different in structure and audience. These were:

- *Elements of Design*/Hannah Gail,(New York Princetown Architectural Press, c2003)

This publication has an abstract association with the manuscript proposed by Hann. It presented design objects through studies in curvilinear, rectilinear, fragments and constructions; these objects were in their finished state and more relevant to Industrial design students. This study was directed through a study of Rowena Reed Kostellow's life and her work in an American Institution. There is not really a comparison with the Hann manuscript which deals with the detail to do with geometry and design.

- *Geometry of Design*/ Elam Kimberly, (New York Princeton Architectural Press) c2001

This publication is extremely formal in its delivery in the main relating to architecture and structural aspects of design. The Hann manuscript delivers geometry subjects to Design student with a less scientific approach.

7. If a research work the book would be mainly published by Libraries and specializing scholars.

8. In the field of Textile Design I would recommend this book as obligatory reading, in other fields of Design it would be recommended reading.

9 & 10
In Conclusion

I would strongly recommend publication, as there is a gap for this type of publication sitting somewhere between the mathematical and design. We are in an age where cross discipline understanding and art and science links are now proven to benefit each discipline and generate new ways of thinking, that publications such as this encourage this kind of methodology. I would like to see good use of colour in the final document, this is always an attraction to a design student and makes for more interesting reading, however I do notice that there is not a provision for colour photos, this may be a cost implication.